



## RESPONSES TO INFORMATION REQUESTS (RIRs)

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3 March 2006

### RUS101131.E

Russia: Treatment of a Russian woman married to an Afro-Guyanese man who is not a Russian citizen if she has mixed-race children (2005 - 2006)

Research Directorate, Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, Ottawa

Information on the treatment of a Russian woman married to an Afro-Guyanese man who is not a Russian citizen if she has mixed-race children was scarce among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate.

The following information was provided by a professor specializing in Soviet history at the Department of European and Russian Studies (EURUS) at the Carleton University during a 1 March 2006 telephone interview. The professor stated that there is no legislation that discriminates against a Russian woman because she is married to a black man, but he speculated that, in practice, [life] could be "difficult" for her. The professor added that he had "no doubt" that a Russian woman married to a black man would be in an "awkward situation" (Professor 1 Mar. 2006). He also indicated that a Russian woman in such a situation could be subject to bribery and pressure by Russian authorities (ibid.).

The professor claimed that because the situation in Russia is marked by poverty and great uncertainty, Russians do tend to "lash out" (ibid.). The professor also speculated that being in an interracial marriage may make things worse for someone (ibid.). Although the professor indicated that racism is a problem in Russia, he stated that the situation could vary within different parts of the country (i.e. racism is more prevalent in St. Petersburg and less in Moscow) (ibid.). The Professor did not provide any information on children of mixed race.

The following information was provided by a representative of the Human Rights Watch (HRW) Moscow Office in 1 March 2006 correspondence:

In general, there is no government-sponsored discrimination with regard to mixed-race marriages (including marriages with people of African origin) in Russia or members of their families, but these people may experience substantial discrimination at the grass-root level, from neighbours, police, at the workplace. The pattern and level of discrimination very much depends on the area where the family lives: people are more tolerant to mixed-race marriages in big cities, less tolerant in small towns and villages.... [Children of mixed race] may be treated differently, not because they are of mixed race but because they are non-Slavs.

This Response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Research Directorate within time constraints. This Response is not, and does not purport to be, conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim for refugee protection. Please find below the list of sources consulted in researching this Information Request.

#### References

Human Rights Watch (HRW). 1 March 2006. Moscow Office. Correspondence received from a representative.

Professor of History, Department of European and Russian Studies (EURUS), Carleton University, Ottawa. 1 March 2006. Telephone interview.

#### Additional Sources Consulted

**Oral sources:** The University of Ottawa did not provide any information on the subject.

The Institute for African Studies (IAS) of the Russian Academy of Sciences (RAS), the Memorial Society

[Moscow], Moscow Helsinki Group (MHG) and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) Moscow Office did not provide information within the time constraints of this response.

**Internet sites, including:** Amnesty International (AI), Antirasizm.ru, Council of Europe (COE), European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI), European Country of Origin Information Network (ECOI), Factiva, Freedom House, Human Rights House Moscow, Human Rights Watch (HRW), Institute for African Studies (IAS) of the Russian Academy of Sciences (RAS), Interfax, International Helsinki Federation for Human Rights (IHF), ITAR-TASS, Memorial Society Moscow, Moscow Helsinki Group (MHG), *Moscow Times*, Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), Pravda.ru, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL), Reuters, Russian News and Information Agency (RIA) Novosti, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNHCHR), United States Department of State.

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